



How Well Do You Know the States?

Social Studies Standards

- Uses and creates maps to locate places, geographic features and patterns of the environment
- Uses maps to demonstrate geographical knowledge

Grade Level: K-5 (ages 5-11)

Teacher Instructions

This activity is best taught after students have learned about the states and map of the U.S. It gives students a chance to move the states around like puzzle pieces to see if they know enough about their locations to get them to fit together. After completing the puzzle, students will be able to show what else they know about the states by adding interesting details to the completed map.

1. Open *US States Exemplar.kid* and review it with the students.

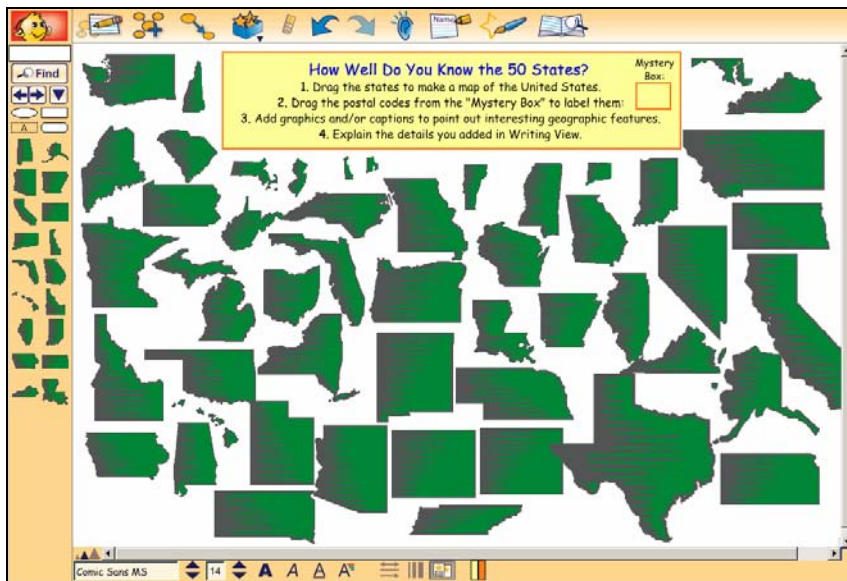


2. Ask students to open *50 States.kia* from **Kidspiration Starter>Activities>Social Studies** and try to fit the states together like a puzzle to recreate the map. They should be encouraged to first attempt this without the aid of a map; this is a form of “mental mapping” to help learn the locations and relative sizes of the states through play. Caution them that state symbols are moved around like squares, so sometimes they overlap; for example, they may have to move



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Nevada and then California or vice versa because otherwise they might be moving one when they mean to move the other. Tell them to not worrying about making it perfect, because they need to move on to the writing portion of the activity. Consider giving them a time limit to assemble the states.



3. After students fit the states together as well as they can independently, they should check their map with an actual map and make adjustments where necessary. The reference map can be provided as a handout, pull-down map in the classroom or any one of the state maps readily available on the Internet. They should also label the states using the postal abbreviations that can be dragged out from the "Mystery Box" in the directions. Consider supplying a handout with the states and abbreviations or a link to the page on the Internet.
4. Show students how to add symbols and labels that point out interesting geographic features. Give them a goal, such as 10 symbols, which can also be drawn using the **Symbol Maker**. If they have trouble, they can consult references in the classroom or on the Internet.
5. Demonstrate how to switch to **Writing View**. Tell students that they will now need to explain their graphics and captions and add additional details. Show students how to check their spelling with **Spell Check**.




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Assessment

- Students can be assessed on their completed map projects and the details they added. Are the states in approximately the right locations? Did they provide the correct number of details? Is their information accurate? Is everything spelled correctly?
- If students present their maps to the class, they can also be assessed on the quality of their presentations.

Lesson Adaptations

- For a shorter activity, students may complete the puzzle without adding written details.
- Students may be asked to add less or more details, depending on their level. One or more types of details may be stressed, such as physical features, economic activities, or state capitals.
- For students who have difficulty with motor coordination, provide the completed map without graphics and let them add their own. They may also add details for the various states in **Writing View** only or record their thoughts by choosing the **Sound** menu>**Record...** Once a symbol has sound, click the **Speaker**  in the upper-right corner of the symbol to hear it.
- For simpler versions of the lesson, have students complete the assignment for a particular region of the country.
- The **Symbol libraries** may be limited or customized if desired. Those options may be found under the **Teacher** menu>**Save With Activity Wizard**.